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BRIEF GUIDE FOR RATING AND REVIEWING OFFICERS

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It's Efficiency Rating Season again, and you, as Rating or Reviewing Officer, have marked responsibilities to your employees and to your agency in all ratings you give. The system may look complicated, but if you follow the brief outline of steps listed below, you won't go wrong.

RATING OFFICER'S GUIDE: Here are the things you must do:

1. Read, or re-read, Pages 1-5, 22 and 23 in the Department of Agriculture Efficiency Rating Manual, and Pages 1-5, and Page 10 of Supplement No. 2. That isn't much reading, but it's information you must know.

2. Select the correct element pattern to be used for each employee you rate.

A. Check whether employee is in supervisory position ("Administrative, Supervisory, or Planning" bracket), or in non-supervisory position ("All others" bracket).

B. Select from Standard List of Element Markings (attached) the element pattern which best fits the employee's position, according to supervisory or non-supervisory duties.

C. Follow carefully steps A to F under Section II, "How to Use the List in Marking S. F. 51" on the attached Standard Element Markings. The circlings and underlinings for Element Pattern No. 25, Clerk (File), for example, would look like this, with non-rated elements omitted:

⑦ Accuracy of operations

⑪ Industry

⑬ Amount of acceptable work produced

⑯ Cooperativeness

⑲ Dependability

D. Check all elements in the pattern, circled and underlined, with your idea of the pertinent and important elements in the particular job. Perhaps there are some important job elements which are not included in the element pattern; perhaps some elements included do not apply. You're the judge of this; note that you are entitled to changes from the element pattern, subject to restrictions under steps D, E, and F of Section II in the attached Element Markings.

3. Rate the employee on each element in the selected pattern, using the symbols check (✓), plus (+), or minus (-). Before you rate each element, check it with the definition of the element on Pages 17-21 of the Manual or with the definitions of supervisory elements in Supplement 2, to insure that your interpretation of the job segment covered by the element is the commonly accepted definition. Discuss with the Reviewing Officer, if possible, the standards for specific elements in your Branch ("What constitutes an acceptable volume of work," etc.) Don't trust your own definitions; uniformity of standards applied to all employees is necessary to obtaining fair efficiency ratings. Mark an element with a check if the employee's performance is adequate --is what should reasonably be required in that kind and level of work. Mark with a plus if his performance is outstanding--is distinctly better than what should reasonably be required. Mark with a minus if his performance is weak--is

(over)

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below what should reasonably be required. Allow sufficient time to make your evaluations so that the rating will reflect careful deliberation and sound judgment.

4 Determine the employee's adjective rating (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Unsatisfactory), according to the revised Standard opposite Page 24 in the Manual. Write it in on the space provided for the Rating Officer. (IMPORTANT: If you rate an employee "Fair" or "Unsatisfactory," a written statement of specific evidence therefor must appear on the reverse side of the rating form.) Check your rating with these questions: Did you consider the entire year's work, or did you rate on one or two isolated instances of failure? Is the rating a constructive criticism? Is it a valid basis for determining promotions, transfers and separations? Is it just to the individual and to the group? Then sign the rating form and enter your title and date in the spaces provided.

5 Hold a rating conference with the employee. (See Page 9 in Manual). Most grievances or appeals are due to a lack of understanding rather than a disagreement as to facts. Each employee is entitled to a clear explanation of your reasons for giving the mark you do to each element on which he is rated. Give him your reasons for each element marking frankly and honestly. In order to make sure that every employee has seen his rating, it is required that the employee sign the efficiency rating form in the lower right corner. This will not constitute the employee's acceptance of the rating, nor interfere in any way with his right of appeal. If you feel that the Reviewing Officer may disagree with your rating, postpone the interview until you have reached an agreement with the Reviewer.

6 Forward the rating form to the proper Reviewing Officer.

REVIEWING OFFICER'S GUIDE: The Reviewing Officer shall: (1) Discuss the efficiency rating system thoroughly with all rating officers under his jurisdiction to obtain a uniform conception of rating standards and procedure. (2) After receiving all forms from the rating officers, check ratings to insure that element patterns have been followed, deviations have been explained, and that correct adjective grades have been derived from marks on all elements. (3) Question all ratings to obtain agreement with the rating officer (a) on pertinent and important elements in the element pattern; (b) on a fair grade based on the actual performance of the employee; (c) on interpretation of standards so that all ratings made by one rating officer are neither too strict nor too lenient. (4) Discuss differences of opinion with rating officer; if every possible effort to arrive at a rating satisfactory to both fails, record changes in red ink without altering marks of initial rater. (5) Enter adjective rating, signature, title and date in appropriate spaces. (6) Return rating forms to the Regional Personnel Division.

SAVE THESE INSTRUCTIONS, THE LIST OF STANDARD ELEMENT MARKINGS, AND YOUR MANUALS -- THEY WILL GUIDE YOU IN ALL RATINGS YOU MAKE IN 1945.